## APPEALS HEARING - 08/30/2016

1	Volume IV
2	Pages 1-91
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4	Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing
5	420 Harvard Street Comprehensive Permit Application
6	420 Harvard Associates, LLC
7	August 30, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
8	Brookline Town Hall
9	333 Washington Street, 6th Floor
10	Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
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15	Reporter: Kristen C. Krakofsky
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                         APPEARANCES
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   Board Members:
   Jesse Geller, Chairman
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 4 Lark Palermo
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   Kate Poverman
  Johanna Schneider
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   Town Staff:
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   Alison Steinfeld, Planning Director
   Maria Morelli, Senior Planner
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12
   40B Consultant:
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  Judi Barrett, Director of Municipal Services
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   RKG Associates, Inc.
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16
   Applicant:
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   Victor Sheen, 420 Harvard Associates, LLC
18
   Dartagnan Brown, Principal, EMBARC Studio, LLC
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   Bob Engler, President, SEB
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   Bradley McKenzie, McKenzie Engineering Group, Inc.
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   Scott Thornton, Vanasse & Associates, Inc.
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    Members of the public:
    Hagen Mauch, 44 Fuller Street
 2
   Mike Jacobs, 41 Coolidge Street
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 4
    Ira Dobrow, 73 Fuller Street
 5
   Robert Lepson, 36 Thorndike Street
 6
    Lynn Rosenberg, 48 Coolidge Street
 7
   Colm McMahon, 45 Coolidge Street
 8
    Jay Talerman, Esq.
 9
    Mary Howard, 108 Fuller Street
    George Abbott White, 143 Winchester Street
10
11
    Chuck Swartz, 69 Centre Street
    Steve Pendery, 26 Winchester Street
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    Mark Rosen, Thorndike Street
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- 1 PROCEEDINGS: 2 7:03 p.m. 3 MR. GELLER: Good evening, everyone. We are 4 reconvening. This is the comprehensive permit 5 application for 420 Harvard Street. Again, for the 6 record, my name is Jesse Geller. To my left is Kate 7 Poverman, to my right -- immediate right is Johanna 8 Schneider, and to Johanna's right is Lark Palermo. 9 As before, tonight's hearing is being kept for 10 a record both in taped fashion as well as a transcript 11 is being kept. Those transcripts are available on the 12 website. 13 What was the last transcript that was posted 14 from the last hearing? 15 MS. MORELLI: August 10th. 16 MR. GELLER: So people can certainly access 17 that for reference. 18
- Tonight's hearing is going to be dedicated to
- a presentation by Cliff Boehmer who is our peer 19
- reviewer for design elements. Cliff is ready to go, 20
- 21 chomping at the bit.
- We will provide the public an opportunity to 22
- 23 speak and offer new testimony. Again, as I've
- 24 commented before, what I would ask is, for an efficient

- 1 proceeding, that you focus on the things that are
- 2 pertinent to this hearing, relevant information that is
- 3 being presented at this hearing this evening. But
- 4 certainly we want to hear any new information that you
- 5 have. And obviously listen to others, and you need not
- 6 repeat what others have said, but you certainly can
- 7 point to them and tell us that you agree with their
- 8 comments.
- 9 We will also give the applicant an opportunity
- 10 to respond if they so choose.
- 11 The next hearing in this matter will be
- 12 September 13th at 7:00 p.m. Right now we are scheduled
- 13 to have traffic peer review at that time, and we will
- 14 also have some testimony from Peter Ditto, the town
- 15 engineer.
- Alison, could you just give us a few updates?
- 17 MS. STEINFELD: Thank you. Alison Steinfeld,
- 18 planning director.
- I raised the issue of 49 Coolidge with MHP,
- 20 which is Massachusetts Housing Partnership, the
- 21 subsidizing agency for this project. MHP had received
- 22 a P&S and, in consultation with their general counsel,
- 23 determined that it is satisfactory to meet the needs of
- 24 site control determination. Thank you.

- 1 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- Okay. Mr. Boehmer. And please start by
- 3 giving us your name and your business address.
- 4 MR. BOEHMER: I'm Cliff Boehmer. I'm the
- 5 president of Davis Square Architects. We're located at
- 6 240A Elm Street in Somerville, which is right in the
- 7 middle of Davis Square.
- I think what I'd like to do is -- as I've done
- 9 before -- is to run through some slides to get people
- 10 oriented to the project. Much of this material you've
- 11 seen already, but I'll touch on a few of the things
- 12 that I'll go into more detail in when I'm really
- 13 reading through the report. So I'll quickly go through
- 14 these slides. We can go back and look at them, as you
- 15 wish, in more detail.
- So the site, I think, is -- well, here it is.
- 17 This is the site right here. This is the existing
- 18 structure there: an older home that's been wrapped
- 19 with a one-story addition subsequent to the
- 20 construction of the original home. This is Fuller
- 21 Street that runs into Harvard Street, and Coolidge is
- 22 on the other side of the site over here.
- 23 This is the site plan sort of sliced right
- 24 through the first-floor level. There had been changes

- 1 in -- from the original development proposal. There's
- 2 been another site added on Coolidge Street to the
- 3 development. What we're looking at here is a ground
- 4 floor plan with a residential entry here.
- 5 Surface parking in this region accessed by a
- 6 curb cut here as well as a double ramp -- up-and-down
- 7 ramp. The up is on that side, as depicted here, down
- 8 on the other. In this area, it used to be -- the
- 9 previous incarnation was some stacking mechanisms that
- 10 were just inside the curb cut. Over there the accessed
- 11 lower-level parking.
- 12 This is the revised lower-level parking. You
- 13 can see --
- Oh, I forgot to mention for the purpose of
- 15 orientation: So this is now a shared open space
- 16 between the properties. This is 49 Coolidge -- shared
- 17 open space between the larger building and the existing
- 18 home on Coolidge.
- This is the basement level accessed by the
- 20 ramp. You see a combination of some single-loaded
- 21 spaces as well as tandem spaces here, tandem spaces
- 22 over here, the ramp. There is a buffer. I just want
- 23 to hit on it. I'll talk about it in more detail later.
- 24 There is an eight-foot buffer indicated on that side of

- 1 the site between those two properties.
- 2 There's a little more detail in the
- 3 first-floor plan, but fundamentally, this is what you
- 4 saw before. This is retail space or commercial space,
- 5 lobby entry, elevator access, surface parking again.
- 6 This is a loading zone that is presumably shared with
- 7 the neighboring commercial property. There is a right
- 8 of way that pedestrians could use to go from Coolidge
- 9 across to get onto that courtyard area, two tandem
- 10 spaces or a pair of tandem spaces in that location.
- And I'll mention this in the report: When we
- 12 had our meeting after the walk-through, that was
- 13 represented as either 1 or 2 three-bedroom units in the
- 14 existing home.
- This is a typical floor plan, essentially two
- 16 through five. There's a very simple plan: double-
- 17 loaded corridor, two stairwells, elevator, a variety of
- 18 unit sizes that surround the entire plan. And then at
- 19 the top level -- this is the blue area -- the top level
- 20 is set back. There are setbacks indicated at the very
- 21 top level that is more apparent when you see building
- 22 elevations and perspective views.
- These are the current building elevations. So
- 24 you can see, this is the elevation as seen by the

- 1 neighboring property, this is the elevation along
- 2 Fuller Street, this is that parking area. It's about
- 3 a -- I believe about a 44-foot curb cut to access the
- 4 ramps and the parking area. Behind that material,
- 5 there are some parking spaces. This is the residential
- 6 entry, and we're looking at fenestration at the
- 7 commercial space.
- 8 These are sections. This is a section along
- 9 Fuller Street, essentially, so there's the building,
- 10 there's the southern -- I'm going to call it a, kind
- 11 of, "project south." This is the southern end of the
- 12 building on Fuller that is propped up. That's the
- 13 parking -- surface parking and access to ramps. That's
- 14 the neighboring home, another home. I believe that's a
- 15 larger apartment building. There is Harvard Street and
- 16 then a commercial building across. This is looking
- 17 from Harvard across. There is the section of the
- 18 proposed building. There are those setbacks I talked
- 19 about. This is the existing market there and the
- 20 existing one-story market across the street -- across
- 21 Fuller Street.
- 22 Another section: This is cut through.
- 23 There's a parking area in that propped-up part of the
- 24 building that you can see and the building that's on

- 1 There you get an idea of how the parking is Coolidge.
- proposed, so you ramp down. This is that courtyard 2
- 3 area, so there are actually parking spaces proposed
- 4 under the courtyard, so that would be some type of
- 5 structured courtyard. That's a section that's cut
- 6 through the building that's been added to the
- 7 development. Here you see the four stories plus the
- 8 top level plus the ground level, so a total of six
- 9 The total building height is around -- is stories.
- indicated to be around 64 feet. 10
- 11 This is the previous proposal that was
- included in the application materials. 12 There have been
- 13 changes since. We see that primarily the balconies
- 14 went away.
- 15 What I did, because -- and I have to tell you
- 16 that this is not a drawing that was prepared by the
- 17 proponent. I did this drawing. The proponent did
- 18 provide me with a Revit, a 3-dimensional model of the
- 19 building, a computer-generated model of the building,
- 20 and I needed to see with my own eyes what I thought it
- would look like within the context. So this is a view 21
- 22 looking from Harvard Street at the building -- at the
- 23 new building. Again, I can't 100 percent verify the
- 24 height of this. It's my drawing. It's not the

- proponent's drawing.
- 2 And this is the view from the other direction,
- 3 so looking -- the other one-story commercial, there's
- 4 the one-story commercial on that side.
- 5 And shadow studies were new. Shadow studies,
- 6 you know, can be kind of tricky to read. I think the
- 7 thing to keep in mind -- there's the building
- footprint, there's Harvard Street. North is straight 8
- 9 up in this drawing. And I think the easiest way to
- 10 understand shadow studies, I think, is just
- understanding that in the -- when the sun is in the 11
- 12 lowest -- here you're seeing the December 20th view of
- 13 the building -- when the sun is really low, it rises,
- 14 actually, south of east and sets south of north --
- 15 south of west. So you get very long shadows cast by
- the development, in contrast with the summer when the 16
- 17 sun is very high in the sky.
- 18 So, you know, shadow impacts are always better
- 19 in the -- or more impactful in the shoulder seasons,
- and then, of course, when the sun is really low, it 20
- never gets very high, and as I said, rises to the south 21
- 22 of east and then sets south of west.
- 23 So what I'll do, I'll bring this back to the
- 24 site plan because that's usually what most people have

- 1 questions about. So if you can bear with me, what I'll
- 2 do is read through this report. It's in a format that
- 3 is -- conforms with -- essentially what I was hired to
- 4 do by the town, and I'll dig right into that and try to
- 5 make it not be a total boring thing.
- 6 Members of the development team did conduct a
- 7 site walk-through. That was back on August 11th.
- 8 Attending, I was there, Maria was there, Victor was
- 9 there, as was Jonathan Parks who works for the
- 10 developer. We did walk the site. It's not very hard
- 11 to walk the site. It's not very big.
- 12 Observations at the walk-through included an
- 13 overhead power service that traverses the site off of
- 14 Fuller Street. That's somewhere right around there
- 15 that cuts across the site. There's an overhead power
- 16 line that -- I think it feeds other properties. It may
- 17 feed this. I'm not entirely sure about that. The
- 18 right-of-way access -- we observed the right of way
- 19 that accesses the main site from Coolidge Street. I
- 20 talked about that before. That's right over there.
- 21 There was fire damage observable. I think everybody
- 22 knows about the fire that happened next door. And the
- 23 street frontage -- we observed frontage both along
- 24 Fuller Street and at Coolidge Street.

- 1 Most of the discussion afterwards was focused
- 2 on reviewing the revised project drawings, which are
- 3 the ones you're seeing now that were not originally
- 4 submitted. The major changes from the May 3rd drawing
- set include the elimination of balconies, the angling 5
- 6 of the north elevation to broaden the view corridor
- 7 from Coolidge Street through to Fuller. That's
- 8 indicated by that dotted line. So in this drawing
- 9 you're looking at the paved surface parking, the ramps.
- The dotted line is the outline of the building above. 10
- 11 The elimination of the stepped elevation on
- 12 the north side, that's better seen in the elevations,
- but this -- the elevation on this side of the building 13
- 14 was stepped -- if you looked in the elevation, it was
- 15 stepped up to the upper levels.
- 16 The replacement of the mechanical parking
- 17 system with more conventional ramped access to the
- 18 basement parking area and the inclusion of the Coolidge
- 19 Street single-family home into the project where there
- will be, reportedly, from that meeting, 1 or 2 20
- 21 three-bedroom units.
- 22 In response to my request to see more
- 23 three-dimensional renderings, particularly from street
- level, the developer did offer to share their 24

- 1 preliminary Revit model, which is the software that
- 2 they use, that had been developed by the architect, and
- 3 the project architect did provide that for me on --
- 4 well, I received it through the town on August 22nd.
- 5 My site visit, a reconnaissance of the
- 6 surrounding residential and nonresidential areas within
- 7 one mile of the site, I did spend a lot of time doing
- 8 this. Harvard Street and Avenue is approximately a
- 9 two-mile stretch of road that runs between Cambridge
- 10 Street in Boston, south, southeast of Washington Street
- 11 in Brookline. It passes through several Brookline
- 12 concentrated commercial areas including Brookline
- 13 Village, Coolidge Corner, which is Brookline's largest
- 14 commercial area, JFK Crossing, and then into Boston
- 15 where Commonwealth Avenue intersects creating another
- 16 concentrated commercial area.
- 17 Generally, on Harvard Street in Brookline,
- 18 between more concentrated commercial zones there are a
- 19 variety of building types and uses with some variation
- 20 in scale and variation in setback. Most prevalent are
- 21 one-story commercial uses with little or no setback,
- 22 that is, right up against the sidewalk.
- 23 There are a variety of three-story masonry
- 24 apartment buildings with no setback or with modest

- 1 setbacks that are just large enough to accommodate a
- 2 little lit of landscaping.
- 3 Several large, historic, wood-frame, former
- 4 homes, probably single-family homes, exist generally
- 5 with significant landscaped areas in the front.
- 6 The street wall is periodically broken by
- 7 parking lots or atypical, most likely nonconforming
- 8 uses, for example gas stations, a supermarket with an
- 9 open-field parking along the street, etc.
- 10 Taller civic or religious structures along
- 11 that long stretch are set back from the street to
- 12 compensate for their increased building height.
- 13 There are also some two-story commercial uses,
- 14 particularly within the Coolidge Corner area.
- 15 retail on the first and what appears to be commercial
- 16 on the second.
- 17 There actually appears to be very little mixed
- 18 residential or commercial development along the street.
- 19 That is, that most commercial buildings are 100 percent
- 20 commercial, and most multifamily buildings are
- 100 percent residential. 21
- 22 There's only one -- two counting the attic of
- S.S. Pierce Building, assuming it is residential. I'm, 23
- frankly, not sure that it is. It looks like it might 24

- 1 be. There's only one 4-story residential building with
- 2 no setback from Harvard Street, and that's just south
- 3 of Coolidge Corner at Vernon street. One other
- 4 four-story residential building is just north of
- 5 Coolidge Corner, but it's set back something like 12 to
- 6 15 feet from the sidewalk.
- 7 The tallest structure on the entire length of
- 8 Harvard Street, with the possible exception of the bell
- 9 tower at St. Mary's, appears to be the Brookline
- 10 professional building. And I will say I wasn't out
- 11 there with my laser measuring tool, but I did look
- 12 pretty carefully. The Brookline professional building
- 13 is a five-story building with parking at the first
- 14 level. It's a commercial building set back about 10
- 15 feet.
- 16 MS. POVERMAN: Where is that?
- 17 MR. BOEHMER: That is just past Beacon Street,
- 18 south of Beacon Street -- south of Coolidge Corner.
- 19 MS. PALERMO: Across from Marion Street.
- MR. BOEHMER: Yeah. Large concrete elevation.
- 21 The entire length of Harvard Street is very
- 22 pedestrian friendly with fully adequate to broad
- 23 sidewalks articulated by some street trees activated by
- 24 many commercial storefronts and some outdoor dining

- 1 opportunities. The length of Harvard Street is served
- 2 by buses, and it crosses two Green Line train tracks,
- B and C, and it dead ends, as you know, in the other 3
- 4 Green Line, the D Line.
- 5 So while there is a large variety of building
- 6 types and scale along Harvard Street, there is a
- 7 consistent attitude towards maintaining a pleasant
- streetscape. Larger civic/religious structures are set 8
- 9 back with landscaping and/or extending entry zones, for
- example grand staircases, and smaller scale residential 10
- and commercial uses hold the sidewalk street wall line 11
- 12 or are set back just enough for modest landscaping.
- The two-block area along Harvard that frames 13
- the proposed development site is an unbroken stretch of 14
- 15 single-story retail uses, all with a strong horizontal
- 16 expression at the cornice or parapet line with
- consistent storefront head height. 17
- 18 Generally, side streets along the Harvard
- 19 corridor that intersect Harvard are lined with one and
- two family, two-and-a-half-story wood-frame houses, hip 20
- 21 or gable roofs, with setbacks adequate for landscaping
- 22 and the creation of a semiprivate outdoor zone.
- 23 Interspersed among the small structures are numerous
- 24 three-story, typically masonry, flat-roof, multifamily

- 1 structures with common entry vestibules that create the
- 2 transition from street to private corridors and the
- 3 stairs within the building.
- 4 There is a four-story, masonry, multifamily
- 5 building on Fuller Street across from the intersection
- 6 of Centre, so just a little ways up from the site.
- 7 This building is set back between 15 and 20 feet, and
- 8 it includes a one-story entry piece that brings the
- 9 scale down to the pedestrian level. This pattern of
- 10 smaller, wood-frame homes mixed in with three-story
- 11 masonry multifamily buildings on side streets is very
- 12 similar, even after passing over into Boston on Harvard
- 13 Avenue.
- 14 The next section is consulting with the
- 15 applicant's design team, and we did have a meeting
- 16 after the walk-through, but we have not met since then.
- 17 So moving on to the review of the buildings
- 18 and the site plan, the orientation of the buildings in
- 19 relation to each other and to the streets, open space,
- 20 parking, and on-site amenities, and solar access.
- 21 The proposal is to build a new six-story
- 22 building that covers most of the Fuller/Harvard site
- 23 with either building footprint, ramp structures down to
- 24 the parking level, or surface parking spaces, as we saw

- in the site plan. The project has incorporated an 1
- 2 existing home on Coolidge, which we already talked
- 3 about, will be 1 or 2 three-bedroom units, immediately
- 4 adjacent to the retail use on the corner of Coolidge
- 5 and Harvard. The development reportedly includes a
- 6 total of 36 units, and I believe the count is 2
- 7 studios, 20 one-bedrooms, 10 two-bedrooms, and 4
- 8 three-bedrooms, 12 at-grade parking spaces, and 28
- 9 basement parking spaces.
- 10 The originally submitted plan that indicated a
- 11 mechanized parking system has been abandoned in favor
- 12 of surface parking plus ramp-accessed basement spaces.
- 13 Between the historic home and the new
- 14 structure spanning the underground parking spaces,
- 15 there is that open-to-the-air courtyard that we talked
- 16 about along with an area designated for bicycle
- 17 parking, which is back there.
- 18 There is an additional eight-foot buffer
- 19 wide-open space proposed between the parking ramps and
- the property along the southwest -- along the southwest 20
- border on Fuller that could provide some landscape 21
- 22 buffering. There is an existing front yard over here
- associated with the existing home on Coolidge. 23
- 24 don't appear to be any other on-site outdoor amenities.

- 1 We talked about the loading zone off of
- 2 Coolidge presumably shared with the retail use on the
- 3 corner along with two tandem parking spaces, and we
- 4 already talked about the right of way. Both Fuller and
- 5 Coolidge are two-way streets.
- 6 Approximately half of the length of the
- 7 building along Fuller Street is open at the ground
- 8 level to accommodate surface parking and access to the
- 9 ramps that connect the parking level to the street, so
- 10 that's this area along here that we talked about. The
- 11 combined length of the curb cuts that access those
- 12 elements is about 44 feet. It's not clear from the
- 13 plans or elevations what material is employed to screen
- parked cars from view beyond the width of the parking 14
- 15 area access without adding screening or solid walls.
- 16 That would add another 18 feet, about, to the open
- 17 parking. So that's this area right here. These are
- 18 parking spaces right in that spot.
- 19 The residential lobby is off of Fuller Street,
- 20 and commercial entry is depicted off of Harvard.
- 21 footprint of the existing structure on Harvard has been
- 22 expanded to match the zero setback of the retail use to
- 23 the west. A single, mature street tree is in front of
- 24 the building near the corner. The building that sits

- 1 there now is actually kind of canted back a bit, so the
- 2 new structure is proposed to come right out to the
- 3 street line in line with the neighbor.
- 4 As far as open space and landscaped areas, as
- 5 I've noted already, open space is limited to a shared
- 6 courtyard, a buffer zone to the south, and the front
- 7 yard at 49 Coolidge. It's not clear that the existing
- 8 mature tree on Harvard will survive the construction
- 9 process or the pruning that would be required to shape
- 10 the crown to the proposed new structure.
- 11 As far as use and treatment of natural
- resources, I'm not aware of any natural resources that 12
- 13 are threatened by the proposed development.
- On to building design, so maybe I will go to 14
- 15 the elevations here. The language of the building is
- 16 minimally depicted in the building elevations. As you
- 17 can see, they're very generic and they're not
- 18 annotated, along with nonspecific notes in the project
- 19 narrative that was included in the application
- 20 materials. The narrative cites a combination of
- 21 full-height storefront system, large format stone
- 22 veneer panels at the first-floor level with levels 2
- through 5 that play off -- these are from the 23
- 24 narrative -- that play off of the traditional Brookline

- 2 neighboring structures: various cladding, siding
- 3 materials, and color palette, close quote.
- 4 This reviewer could find no information
- 5 regarding the sixth-floor cladding, which is rendered
- 6 differently from the main body, so that's that -- kind
- 7 of the attic level, nor any more specific information
- 8 about the selection of materials on the other levels.
- 9 Accordingly, it's difficult to comment on the
- 10 relationship to vernacular relative to materiality.
- In addition to missing information on typical
- 12 floor designs, no elevator/stair penthouses or
- 13 mechanical equipment screening are depicted in the
- 14 elevations or any of the axonometric views that were
- 15 provided. So what I'm pointing out is we don't see any
- 16 mechanical equipment or screening that would probably
- 17 have to happen or stair or elevator penthouse areas.
- 18 The facade fenestration, as seen in the
- 19 elevations, consists of simple, repeated patterns of
- 20 what appear to be somewhat oversized
- 21 fixed-over-projected windows. That's me speaking.
- 22 This was not outlined, but I read these windows as a
- 23 fixed pane over a projected. It could be a projected
- 24 window over fixed, but you can see it. It's a divided,

- 1 somewhat oversized window for residential use. This
- 2 pattern is carried across all floors, two through five,
- 3 with virtually no variation in window types.
- 4 There's no articulation in the main body of
- 5 the facade that could accentuate important design
- 6 elements. For example, accentuating the retail entry,
- 7 the resident entry, corner conditions, vehicular
- 8 access, etc.
- 9 The length of the facade along Fuller Street
- 10 is about 110 feet long -- that's this guy -- with no
- 11 articulation that could relate it to the scale of the
- 12 existing residential development on the street. Even
- 13 the existing multifamily facades on Fuller -- further
- 14 up Fuller are broken up with multiple entries,
- 15 human-scale detailing, and other things that related to
- 16 the street.
- 17 The sixth-floor-attic level is set back
- 18 something like five feet on all elevations, and the
- 19 fenestration pattern is offset a little from the floor
- 20 below, so you don't see perfect alignment in elevation
- 21 of the -- at the attic level. It's not clear how the
- 22 horizontal banding at the division between the first
- 23 and second floor relates to the adjacent or nearby
- 24 retail uses. I'm talking about the elevation on

- 1 Harvard.
- 2 The same is true of what's proposed for
- storefront design. There are no -- basically, there 3
- 4 are no street elevations showing context in the
- 5 materials.
- 6 The end of the building that's propped up
- 7 along Fuller Street -- this end -- lacks connection to
- 8 the ground and appears precarious. All we see here are
- 9 some columns holding up that end of the building.
- 10 The new building's massing and scale are
- 11 radically and abruptly at variance with the surrounding
- 12 context both along Harvard and Fuller Street.
- 13 likely that the building, if constructed as currently
- 14 proposed, would be the tallest structure anywhere on
- 15 Harvard Street all along its run through Brookline.
- 16 It's the opinion of this reviewer that the
- 17 height of the building, which is almost 64 feet to the
- 18 main roof, as well as its unbroken length along Fuller
- 19 Street combined with zero front and side setbacks puts
- it significantly outside of existing development 20
- 21 patterns over the entire distance along Harvard Street
- 22 and Harvard Avenue from Brookline Village to Cambridge
- 23 Streets in Boston.
- 24 While the site is arguably generally

- 1 appropriate for residential development, the scale,
- 2 massing, setbacks, and perhaps the facade design create
- 3 a typology wholly outside of the existing fabric. The
- 4 impact on the streetscape will be significant, as will
- 5 the degradation of privacy and access to natural light
- 6 to the immediate neighbor on Fuller street.
- 7 Next I'll talk a little bit about the side
- 8 elevations. The south elevation on Fuller Street,
- 9 assuming the presence of the tapered-view corridor, is
- 10 between about 15 -- actually, we're talking about
- 11 here -- is between about 15 to 25 feet. So in the
- 12 tapered elevation, we're looking at the closest the
- 13 building gets to the neighbor on Fuller Street.
- 14 Assuming the presence of the tapered-view corridor,
- 15 it's about 15 to 25 feet -- 15 at the minimum, 25 at
- 16 the greatest -- from the neighboring home with five
- 17 levels of apartments facing the neighbor. Two levels
- 18 look directly across at the habitable floors of the
- 19 home, and the three remaining floors either look out
- 20 over the neighbor's roof or look over the roof. So
- 21 these two levels here -- the windows in this building
- 22 are in the first part of that gambrel roof, and there
- 23 are three floors that are either looking right out
- 24 there or looking over the building.

- 1 In addition to the nearness of the six-story
- 2 massing, the 44-foot curb cut along Fuller Street is
- 3 problematic. While it's arguable that the existing
- 4 open parking area is a similar width, it's open -- the
- 5 existing area is open to the sky and there are only two
- 6 lanes of car movement to monitor. The proposed cub cut
- 7 accommodates two incoming and two outgoing lanes, one
- 8 of which is coming up a ramp towards the sidewalk, and
- 9 the south end of the building is propped up above,
- 10 casting year-round afternoon shadows on the street, the
- 11 surface parking spaces, and the ramp access to the
- 12 basement parking.
- 13 In addition to pedestrian issues on the
- sidewalk, developing a convincing building elevation 14
- 15 that suitably grounds the building, screens the parking
- 16 spaces, and is supportive of existing development is
- 17 challenging.
- 18 The west elevation of the building that will
- 19 be visible from Harvard Street approaching is drawn
- with a high percentage of window area, and I just ask 20
- 21 the question of whether that's feasible given the
- 22 nearness to the property line.
- 23 As far as pedestrian and vehicular
- 24 circulation, the original submission included

- 1 mechanized vehicular access to the basement parking
- 2 supplemented by surface parking beneath the south end
- 3 of the building. While the current plan that dispenses
- 4 with the auto transfer area is easier to envision from
- 5 a technical perspective, as noted above, the shift to a
- 6 traditional ramp system combined with surface parking
- 7 does create other issues related to the Fuller Street
- 8 building elevation and the pedestrian environment.
- 9 question of the best parking solution is still open in
- this reviewer's mind: whether it still is worth 10
- 11 thinking about a mechanized system or not.
- 12 Integration of the building and site,
- 13 including but not limited to preservation of existing
- 14 tree cover: The site is currently fully occupied by a
- 15 commercial use -- virtually 100 percent impervious
- 16 surface -- and has one mature tree in front that's on
- the public right of way, which is right there. And I 17
- 18 noted that consideration should be given to adding
- 19 street trees along Harvard.
- 20 Exterior materials: I already told you what
- 21 was provided in the materials.
- 22 Energy efficiency: No information was
- 23 available for review. Brookline has adopted the
- 24 Stretch Code which will ensure relatively high levels

- 1 of sustainability, at least from an operating
- 2 perspective.
- I didn't find any information about exterior
- 4 lighting.
- 5 There was no new landscape plan provided with
- 6 the revised scheme. There was a landscape plan
- 7 originally submitted, but this is what we have for the
- 8 new scheme.
- 9 As far as the feasibility of incorporating
- 10 environmental and energy performance standards in the
- 11 design, construction, and operation of the building
- 12 such as standards required for LEED certification,
- 13 there's no information that expresses the developer's
- 14 desire to design and construct to a third-party
- 15 verifiable level. It's not included in the application
- 16 materials beyond the project narrative that states
- 17 specific attention will be placed on making this a
- 18 sustainable project, carefully selecting products from
- 19 appliances through building components to achieve this
- 20 level of sustainability.
- 21 Any other -- this is sort of my catch-all
- 22 category of any other design-related considerations
- 23 noted. The floor plans are limited to fit plans -- you
- 24 saw those already -- that box out the gross square

- 1 footage of units within the proposed overall footprint
- 2 of the building. It's not possible to review
- 3 conformance with some code requirements. For example,
- 4 accessibility codes. Fit plans don't indicate the
- 5 locations and types of proposed Group 2 accessible
- 6 units. Note that all units in an elevator-fed building
- 7 must be, at a minimum, Group 1 accessible units.
- 8 Some other comments: Is it possible that the
- 9 fire department will have concerns about access to all
- 10 elevations of the large building?
- 11 A question about how trash will be handled.
- I already noted that the -- there's no rooftop
- 13 elevator extension, penthouses, mechanical equipment
- 14 screening depicted on any of the drawings. I think
- 15 it's important to see those.
- During the initial meeting on August 11th, the
- 17 developer stated that there would not be a stairway
- 18 access to the roof, and I'm just asking if this is
- 19 realistic given the amount of mechanical equipment that
- 20 would likely be up there, particularly given the scale
- 21 of the proposed development and the extremely
- 22 constrained site area available for contractor layout.
- A construction management plan should be
- 24 submitted for review.

- 1 A question I did ask at the walk-through was:
- 2 Does the power company have an easement over the site
- 3 for that overhead line?
- 4 Provision of on-site resident amenities should
- 5 be considered, which would most likely be made possible
- 6 by diminishing the size of the commercial space.
- 7 The surface parking under the Harvard Street
- 8 building shows accessible spaces that share a five-foot
- 9 aisle. A van-accessible space must be provided, and
- 10 that actually requires an eight-foot aisle between
- 11 those parking spaces.
- 12 Traffic/parking analysis should be updated to
- 13 reflect the current plan or to consider other options
- 14 that might mitigate some of the issues that I talked
- 15 about.
- 16 And the stormwater management plan, there was
- 17 an original submission of that, and that also needs to
- 18 be updated.
- 19 And as far as techniques to mitigate the
- visual impact, as noted in detail above, the project is 20
- 21 significantly out of conformance with existing
- 22 development patterns along the entire length of Harvard
- 23 Street and Harvard Avenue. At a minimum, to mitigate
- 24 the problem, the relationship of building height to

- setback must be recalibrated; the best solution likely 1
- 2 being to lower the overall height of the structure and
- to create a strong alignment of the first-floor retail 3
- 4 reference roof and cornice line along Harvard. Another
- 5 potential solution is to lose less height but create a
- 6 meaningful setback to the upper floors from Harvard and
- 7 Fuller Street.
- 8 Another thing to think about is the setback
- 9 from the neighboring structure on Fuller should be
- 10 increased to diminish privacy and access-to-light
- 11 issues. The shadow studies are not actually that
- 12 The shadow impact isn't that much on the impactful.
- 13 adjacent building on Fuller, but the access to open sky
- is significant. 14
- 15 And then the final comment: Setback along
- Fuller Street should be increased, particularly given 16
- 17 how narrow the right of way is on that street.
- 18 That's it.
- 19 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 20 Ouestions?
- 21 MS. POVERMAN: I just want to confirm my
- 22 understanding that you said that the distance between
- the windows of the project on the west side and the 23
- residence on Fuller Street -- 44 Fuller Street, I 24

- 1 believe the address is -- are between 15 feet at the
- 2 closest and 25 feet?
- 3 MR. BOEHMER: Well, we're talking about this
- 4 dimension right there. There are windows at the second
- 5 level in the neighboring building as well as windows up
- 6 in the gambrel roof, so that's kind of the two and a
- 7 half stories, or third floor is actually utilized in
- 8 that building.
- 9 MS. POVERMAN: So closest -- that closest
- 10 point, how far away are the neighbors going to be
- 11 looking at each other as it's currently structured?
- MR. BOEHMER: Well, it kind of depends exactly
- 13 where that window is. It varies as you move back into
- 14 the site, but that's the 15-foot dimension, that's the
- 15 25-foot dimension. There are windows in that elevation
- 16 of the neighboring building. So the actual distance
- 17 depends upon which window you're looking out, I quess.
- 18 MS. POVERMAN: I'm going to hop around a bit
- 19 here. Do you feel like the shadow study you received
- 20 is adequate to do the analysis -- a full analysis of
- 21 the impact?
- MR. BOEHMER: I think it is. You know,
- 23 assuming that it's accurately constructed, I think it
- 24 is. It looks right. I mean, we didn't talk about that

- 1 much at all, but because of where the building sits,
- 2 most of the impact is actually out onto -- right onto
- 3 Harvard Street. Most of the time, most of the impact
- 4 is on Harvard Street. As the sun gets lower, as I was
- 5 saying in the shoulder period, you are starting to get
- 6 shadows -- they do cast shadows on their own property.
- 7 Probably that's one of the greater impacts, which is on
- 8 49 Coolidge Street, and there is some shadow impact on
- 9 the neighboring building during the wintertime.
- 10 MS. MORELLI: Cliff, if you could just advance
- 11 to the next slide, I think you might have the proposed
- 12 conditions.
- MR. BOEHMER: Oh, yeah, you're right. Sorry.
- So anyway, as I was saying, in the extreme
- 15 conditions with low sun and late in the day, they are
- 16 casting shadows across onto Coolidge Street, including
- 17 the neighboring property that isn't on their site. But
- 18 most of the shadow impact -- and you can see that. And
- 19 there's Harvard Street. Very many times of the year,
- 20 you're seeing shadow impacts on Harvard Street because
- 21 it's almost facing south. But it seems like it was
- 22 reasonably presented. I didn't reconstruct it. I do
- 23 have the Revit model that was given.
- 24 MS. POVERMAN: What additional information

- 1 would you need to determine whether or not the project
- 2 is compatible with 40B design guidelines?
- 3 MR. BOEHMER: I think that I would like to see
- 4 the justification for just exactly how it does fit in.
- 5 As I note in my report, to me, I did study the entire
- 6 length of Harvard Street and the side streets, and I
- 7 don't see where it is fitting in the development
- 8 pattern for quite a distance, and I haven't -- the
- 9 narrative didn't express how it did fit into existing
- 10 development patterns. I looked pretty thoroughly up
- 11 and down lots of streets to make my own determination.
- 12 MS. POVERMAN: And would it also include
- 13 information about the materials that are going to be
- 14 used and fenestration, etc.?
- MR. BOEHMER: Well, that's why I said in the
- 16 report it's, to me, the massing, the setbacks, the
- 17 height of the building. That, to me, is demonstrable
- 18 right now. It's not fitting in. I can't comment on
- 19 the materials. So there was a reference in the
- 20 narrative about kind of farming the neighborhood for
- 21 vernacular materials and things like that, but I don't
- 22 know what they are, so I can't comment on that.
- MS. POVERMAN: Judi, I know there are cases
- 24 outside the 40B context that address basically how

- 1 close is too close when neighbors are next to each
- 2 other. Do you know of anything in the 40B context that
- 3 addresses that?
- 4 MS. BARRETT: Not in 40B, no, I don't. That
- 5 doesn't mean it doesn't exist. It's just, I'm not an
- 6 expert on all the cases. If it's something you wanted
- 7 me to research, I would, but I can't answer your
- 8 question off the top of my head. That's up to you
- 9 guys. You need to tell me what you need.
- MS. POVERMAN: I would find it helpful to have
- 11 information on that.
- MS. BARRETT: I suspect I'm not going to find
- 13 much, but I'm happy to look if you want me to.
- MS. POVERMAN: That wouldn't surprise me
- 15 either.
- 16 For right now, those are all my questions.
- 17 MS. SCHNEIDER: I just want to pick up on a
- 18 point that Kate raised, and someone correct me if I'm
- 19 misremembering. But I think that at some point,
- 20 perhaps at the first meeting, the applicant made
- 21 reference to there being height precedent on Centre
- 22 Street and a couple of other streets off of Harvard.
- 23 You conducted a very thorough analysis of the relative
- 24 height of this building compared with basically the

- 1 entire length of Harvard, Brookline Village, and then
- 2 back into Boston. Do taller buildings off of
- 3 Harvard -- how does that affect the contextual analysis
- 4 in your mind?
- 5 MR. BOEHMER: Well, that's a good question
- 6 because Centre Street isn't far away and there are
- 7 several very large buildings on Centre Street and the
- 8 street immediately behind Centre Street. There's a
- 9 large condominium building right behind -- well, down
- 10 near the 40 Centre Street end.
- 11 The context is very different. The south side
- 12 of Centre Street has been developed with -- it's
- 13 interesting. The north side of Centre Street is quite
- 14 intact, actually. A lot of large homes with lots of
- 15 articulation in the fronts of the buildings,
- 16 pedestrian-sized entry pieces on the buildings. It's
- 17 relatively intact.
- The other side of Centre Street has really
- 19 changed radically. There's still a handful of older
- 20 homes there, but in my mind it's a different -- it's a
- 21 very different context. It doesn't have the same very
- 22 strong commercial presence that Harvard Street has. It
- 23 doesn't have the kind of consistent attitude towards a
- 24 pedestrian environment and the streetscape. So to me

- 1 it's very different. Yes, there are tall buildings
- 2 around but, as I pointed out, I believe that this
- 3 building would be the tallest building on Harvard
- 4 Street. And by definition, that we're not talking
- 5 about a contextual approach to the project.
- 6 MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you.
- 7 MS. POVERMAN: I have one more question I
- 8 forgot to ask.
- 9 How much height, typically, would the
- 10 mechanical, etc., add to a building if they're not
- 11 pictured on --
- 12 MR. BOEHMER: It's highly variable. I think
- 13 there was -- in the narrative, I believe there was a
- 14 reference to having individual heating and cooling in
- 15 the units. To me, that implies that there might be a
- 16 small farm of condensing units. Those are not that
- 17 tall, maybe five feet, three and a half to five feet
- 18 tall on the roof. There's -- elevator overrun has to
- 19 be accommodated if the elevator goes to the top floor,
- 20 so there's -- that has to be accommodated on the roof.
- It's different if you have different types of
- 22 mechanical systems. If there were a chiller up there,
- 23 that would be a bigger, taller piece of equipment. But
- 24 it's variable. Probably, the tallest thing is, if it

- 1 existed, would be a stair penthouse. So providing
- 2 stairway access to the roof would probably be the
- 3 tallest piece that you'd have to add onto the roof.
- 4 MS. POVERMAN: At what height would these
- 5 accessories have to be visible a block away looking at
- 6 the building?
- 7 MR. BOEHMER: Interesting question. I think
- 8 probably -- again, I'm going to repeat: These are my
- 9 drawings, so there you get some idea. Usually, the
- 10 goal is to place the equipment far enough back on the
- 11 roof so that you don't get a view. I can't really tell
- 12 you if you can get far enough away to see something if
- 13 it were really strategically placed on the roof.
- MS. POVERMAN: If there were a mechanical
- 15 failure, how could someone get to the roof to repair it
- 16 if they were --
- 17 MR. BOEHMER: Well, the code does have
- 18 allowances for hatches. You can have hatches. I
- 19 brought it up mainly in the context of imagining 36, at
- 20 least, condensing units up there that require
- 21 maintenance, ongoing lots of maintenance, and going up
- 22 a ladder -- ladder access to a roof under those
- 23 circumstances. It can be tough, not impossible. It
- 24 happens a lot, actually.

- 1 MS. POVERMAN: Okay. Thank you.
- 2 MR. GELLER: You didn't say it, but it seems
- 3 to me you suggested that -- you certainly said it with
- 4 respect to Fuller Street, but I assume that your
- 5 comment with respect to breaking up the mass of the
- 6 building would apply also on Harvard Street. You seem
- 7 to be suggesting that by speaking of large windows --
- 8 MR. BOEHMER: I think that my concerns on
- 9 Harvard Street have more to do with the height of the
- 10 building, reference lines to the one-story commercial
- 11 level, and the lack of setbacks.
- 12 As I was noting, there are some taller
- 13 buildings along Harvard Street, but they are still
- 14 really consistent with the context in the sense that
- 15 they're really trying to maintain a very walkable,
- 16 pleasant, generally pedestrian-scaled environment. So
- 17 for me, there's a lot of -- a lot can happen in
- 18 building elevations that aren't necessarily about
- 19 movement in the elevation. You know, in and out in
- 20 plans, so to speak.
- 21 For me, the issue is more just the massing of
- 22 the building. There's not enough information in the
- 23 drawings to really know, other than setback at the top
- 24 floor, you know, what they're proposing as far as

- 1 window setbacks. Clearly there are no bays.
- 2 But other comments I was making, when I say
- 3 "generic," I think that's kind of what I meant, the way
- 4 the building is presented is -- there's no -- it's just
- 5 very simple window patterns projected up through four
- 6 floors. No recognition of where the entry is, you
- 7 know, essentially the residential entry. And again, no
- 8 really strong statement on that first floor, the
- 9 first-floor commercial line.
- 10 So I'm not trying to evade what you're asking.
- 11 I think the building could -- needs to -- needs to have
- 12 much more study and development of the facade. But in
- 13 my mind, it kind of really wouldn't matter what you do
- 14 to the facade as long as the building is as tall as it
- 15 is. That, to me, is most impactful, the issue with the
- 16 building.
- 17 MS. BARRETT: As tall without setbacks?
- 18 MR. BOEHMER: Correct. That's right. There
- 19 are -- well, like I said, there are some four-story
- 20 buildings, residential buildings, that do have some
- 21 setbacks, but that's lower than this building is --
- 22 four stories is.
- MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- MS. POVERMAN: In those areas, are the

- 1 sidewalks as wide as they are here?
- 2 MR. BOEHMER: There's not that much variation
- 3 in the sidewalk width all along Harvard Street. The
- 4 real differences along Harvard Street are, as I was
- 5 saying, the kinds of anomalies where there was a gas
- 6 station made or a supermarket with a parking field. So
- 7 not a huge variation.
- 8 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 9 Okay. I want to -- I'm going to sort of jump
- 10 around on the agenda a little bit. I'd like to -- just
- 11 by a show of hands, how many people would like to
- 12 speak -- would like to offer testimony?
- 13 Again, a fair number.
- Okay. So as we've done in the past, when you
- 15 start, start by giving us your name, your address,
- 16 speak loudly and clearly into the microphone at the
- 17 podium where Mr. Boehmer is standing, and listen to
- 18 what other people have to say.
- MR. MAUCH: Good evening. My name is Hagen
- 20 Mauch, M-A-U-C-H, owner of 44 Fuller Street.
- I found this greatly instructive, but I have a
- 22 general comment. There is, in one of the slides, a
- 23 picture of 44 Fuller Street next to the proposed
- 24 building, and I have an issue with the developer. He

- 1 and his architect asked me if they could measure the
- 2 height of my house, and we did a proper measurement.
- 3 We all agreed the house is 36 feet. It's supposed to
- 4 be confirmed by a study Colm submitted to the planning
- 5 board, which also shows the house at 36 feet.
- 6 Now, the developer has changed the height to
- 7 42 feet. And when I did sketches of the proposed
- 8 building compared with my house, it looked to me like
- 9 the house is considerably smaller than it's shown. So
- 10 I'm -- have some suspicion that the architects or the
- 11 developer increased the size of the neighboring
- 12 building to make the proposed building a little bit
- 13 more attractive, and that is very devious, and I just
- 14 want to bring that to your attention.
- I confronted Mr. Sheen from my porch, and I
- 16 told him: Do you remember that you measured the house
- 17 with me?
- 18 And he gave me a reasonable answer and said,
- 19 it has been remeasured. That's when we come to a solid
- 20 argument. I said, I'm an engineer. If you measure the
- 21 house with a tape and you agree it's 36 feet, you
- 22 cannot make it 42 to suit your needs. Thank you.
- MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- MR. JACOBS: Good evening. My name is Mike

- 1 Jacobs. I live at 41 Coolidge Street.
- I just have -- first, have just two
- 3 clarifications on the MHP issues. One, is there a site
- 4 control document about the 49 Coolidge Street that's in
- 5 the town's possession?
- 6 MS. STEINFELD: Purchase and sale.
- 7 MR. JACOBS: Excuse me?
- 8 MS. STEINFELD: A purchase and sale.
- 9 MR. JACOBS: There is a purchase and sale.
- 10 Has that been posted, or will it be posted?
- 11 MS. STEINFELD: (Nodding.)
- MR. JACOBS: And two, has the question been
- 13 posted -- posed to MHP as to whether this is a
- 14 substantial change in terms of reevaluating the site
- 15 approval?
- MS. STEINFELD: Other than that MHP said they
- 17 would make a determination after a comprehensive permit
- 18 is issued.
- 19 MR. JACOBS: Okay. Thank you.
- You know, with regards to Mr. Boehmer's
- 21 letter, I think it, obviously, to us, confirms all of
- 22 the issues that have been raised to the board. Beyond,
- 23 sort of, it being striking, what we've all said about
- 24 massing and height, I think the other thing that's

- 1 striking is we're now halfway through the 180-day
- 2 process. And what was striking to me is how much
- 3 missing information is still out there: materials, we
- 4 still don't really know what's up there on the roof in
- 5 terms of the mechanicals and what the height of that
- 6 could be, how that could affect shadows, how that could
- 7 affect sound, how that could affect light. We actually
- 8 don't know the total number of units, we don't know the
- 9 unit mix, we're still dealing with a lack of unit
- 10 plans. I do a lot of 40B work, and to go almost 90
- 11 days into the process and still not see unit plans is
- 12 fairly remarkable for a building of this scale.
- 13 If this board is being asked to make some
- 14 major decisions, I would hate to find out after the
- 15 fact -- to get this information and have them come back
- 16 to you for, quote, minor changes if you granted them a
- 17 permit, so I urge you, please, to get all of this
- 18 information before you make a decision. We would hate
- 19 to find out the 64-foot building is a 75-foot building
- 20 after the fact. Thank you very much.
- 21 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- MR. DOBROW: Good evening. Ira Dobrow. I
- 23 live at 73 Fuller Street.
- 24 I would like to thank the architect for his

- 1 presentation, and I thought that there were a couple of
- 2 things that really stood out to me while I was looking
- 3 at it. And that was, first of all, the -- I agree with
- 4 the issue of the overall height of the building, and
- 5 also the architect quoted a number of times the kind of
- 6 one-story line that is on Harvard Street on that block.
- 7 I feel like if the floors above the first floor were
- 8 recessed, you'd have a much stronger integration with
- 9 that line on Harvard Street. I think, perhaps, the
- 10 architect was saying that, but I wanted to emphasize
- 11 that. So if you could set those back and, of course,
- 12 lower the building.
- But the other thing that I really can't quite
- 14 see a resolution in is that kind of 44-foot driveway on
- 15 Fuller Street with the posts supporting the kind of,
- 16 you know, set back building there. It's really -- as
- 17 far as I'm concerned, really destroying the element of
- 18 everything that exists in that neighborhood. I'm not
- 19 quite sure what could be done about that, but it's
- 20 really bothersome. Thank you.
- 21 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- MR. LEPSON: Hi. My name is Robert Lepson,
- 23 L-E-P-S-O-N, 36 Thorndike Street.
- 24 Again, I appreciate the architect's peer

- 1 review. It was very informative. And I think the
- 2 thing that stood out most for me was the fact that it
- 3 is so out of character with the rest of Harvard Street
- 4 and the rest of the neighborhood. So I know that many
- 5 people feel that way, so I won't beat a dead horse, but
- 6 I just want to emphasize that on my end.
- 7 I'm not opposed to development, I am not
- 8 opposed to low income housing, I'm not opposed to low
- 9 income housing in my neighborhood at all. This just
- 10 feels like there's too much that's being jammed into
- 11 too small of a space with things that are way out of
- 12 character for its location.
- 13 I'm also very concerned about the traffic on
- 14 Fuller Street. I know that's two weeks from now or
- 15 three weeks from now, but emergency access -- Fuller
- 16 Street is very cramped to begin with, and sometimes
- 17 it's even tough to get two cars past when there's cars
- 18 that are sometimes double parked. That whole thing is
- 19 another very, very difficult issue. So again, I'll
- 20 just -- I'm okay with development, I'm okay with low
- 21 income housing in the neighborhood. This is not okay
- 22 in my opinion. Thank you.
- MS. ROSENBERG: Hi. My name is Lynn
- 24 Rosenberg. I live at 48 Coolidge Street, which is

- 1 right across the street from 49 Coolidge Street, which
- 2 is the building that has just recently been bought and
- 3 incorporated. And it's also across the street from the
- 4 back of The Butcherie with their loading area and their
- 5 dumpster. And what we have learned recently is that
- 6 the developers are now proposing to use Coolidge Street
- 7 for an entry, I gather, to the back of the house for
- 8 deliveries and that kind of thing.
- 9 Now, The Butcherie has trucks loading and
- 10 unloading in that area all day long. In addition, The
- 11 Butcherie employees -- at least some of them -- park on
- 12 Coolidge Street all day long, for some reason, with
- 13 impunity. The customers of The Butcherie come and park
- 14 on Coolidge Street, so it's a very busy street. The
- 15 truck that empties the dumpster comes a couple times a
- 16 week and empties it and blocks up the street. And not
- 17 only that, when the Jewish holidays come, the dumpster
- 18 needs to be emptied every day. So it's an extremely
- 19 busy street, and it's really a mystery to me how the
- 20 developers would somehow use that area to enter the
- 21 back of their building.
- It's sort of instructive that recently there
- 23 was a fire that began in the alley next to The
- 24 Butcherie that damaged the house at 49 Coolidge Street.

- 1 And the reason this fire started, it seems, is that
- 2 there's usually debris around the dumpster at The
- 3 Butcherie, and the workers at The Butcherie come out
- 4 and smoke in that alleyway. And someone, the fire
- 5 department official told me, must have dropped a
- 6 lighted cigarette and it then caught fire and started
- 7 to burn down 49 Coolidge Street.
- Now, this is the area with trucks loading and
- 9 unloading all day long, the dumpster being loaded,
- 10 unloaded, the workers out in the alleyway smoking among
- 11 the debris, this is what they are proposing to use as
- 12 their back entrance to their building.
- 13 And the final word is that my neighbor spoke
- 14 to someone from The Butcherie today who said they have
- 15 no intention of sharing that area with anyone. Thank
- 16 you very much.
- 17 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 18 MR. MCMAHON: Good evening. My name is Colm
- 19 McMahon. I live at 45 Coolidge Street. I agree with
- 20 everything that's been said and thank the architect for
- 21 his detailed and insightful review of this proposal.
- 22 A few comments: One, just to speak to Lynn's
- 23 comment about the use of Coolidge Street. I think as
- 24 the traffic reviewer looks at this, it will be

- 1 important to factor in that The Butcherie is closed
- 2 currently as they renovate after this fire, so a lot of
- 3 the deliveries and traffic associated with that can't
- 4 be studied until that reopens, outside of the fact that
- 5 it's the summer months before the school is returning
- 6 and the children start walking to school.
- 7 A minor point just to pick up something in the
- 8 presentation: The green buffer zone we see here is
- 9 actually five feet, not eight feet. It's eight feet to
- 10 the building, but it's five feet of green space there.
- 11 And then finally, to talk about the shadows a
- 12 little bit -- so even just visually looking at the
- 13 existing versus the proposed shadows, you can see a lot
- 14 more gray than there was before. One thing that was
- 15 requested by MHP in their site eligibility acceptance
- 16 letter was to show a map which showed the current
- 17 versus the proposed changes in shadows on one picture.
- 18 That was something that the developers at 40 Centre
- 19 were able to provide, and it gives a very nice way of
- 20 seeing the difference that happens when you build a
- 21 structure which is much bigger.
- 22 But just to comment particularly on this
- 23 shadow study, what we can see -- and Mr. Boehmer spoke
- 24 about the effect on 44 Fuller Street, but there's a

- 1 significant effect in the morning throughout all of the
- 2 year on Coolidge Street. So here's our house here.
- 3 You can see it's now covered in gray even in the
- 4 summer. You go through the winter, and it's completely
- 5 blacked out. Sunlight is extremely important. It's
- 6 important for health. We've all heard of seasonal
- 7 affective disorder. In the winter, the sunlight hours
- 8 are less. This would be completely taken away from us
- 9 year-round and, in particular, in the winter. It
- 10 extends into later hours in some of these other times
- 11 of the year.
- 12 One other comment is that the shadow study
- 13 doesn't completely include what buildings it affects,
- 14 so the shadows here in the winter actually extend
- 15 across the far side of Coolidge Street onto buildings
- 16 across the road from us. So it's not just immediate
- 17 abutting neighbors, it's affecting buildings which are
- 18 across the street. So that's an important thing to
- 19 consider. This is so large, its negative effect
- 20 extends way beyond its immediate place. And that
- 21 should really be represented, I think, on this map in
- 22 terms of the loss of light that's occurring to all of
- 23 the neighbors. Thanks very much.
- MR. GELLER: Thank you.

- 1 MR. TALERMAN: Hello. Jay Talerman again. I
- 2 represent a number of the neighbors here and a couple
- 3 that have spoken. I'm certainly struck by some of the
- 4 comments that the architect made. For example, it's
- 5 radically and abruptly at variance with the
- 6 neighborhood. The development pattern fits in squarely
- 7 with the regulations, which, as you know, allow you to
- 8 take into consideration the relationship of a project
- 9 to the abutting properties and the abutting
- 10 development patterns.
- I want to talk a little bit less about that --
- 12 because I think what's been said stands on its own --
- 13 and a little more about process. And two meetings ago
- 14 I raised some concerns about that in the same vein, and
- 15 that is, if you're three months in now and there's a
- 16 process at which if you are -- have concerns about the
- 17 scale and the mass of this and you want to see this
- 18 change, at what point do you raise those issues?
- 19 And it's important, and it kind of dovetails a
- 20 little bit with what Ms. Poverman said in terms of case
- 21 law. Because I think you're getting very close to the
- 22 point in the six-month process where if you have
- 23 concerns, say about the mass or the setbacks or
- 24 anything that the architect said, might now or very

- 1 soon be the time to say, okay, this is the kind of
- 2 things that we'd like to see change here. And would
- 3 you be willing to change? And if you're not willing to
- 4 change, show us why economically you can't afford to
- 5 change.
- 6 And if they show that to you economically,
- 7 then you are permitted to do peer review. That is a
- 8 two-month cycle right there. You are now three months
- 9 in, you have six months total, so it is getting to be
- 10 the, kind of, late afternoon in terms of how you want
- 11 to approach this going forward. I think only you guys
- 12 can make that decision, but if it waits until five
- 13 months, absent an extension, then you're behind the
- 14 eight ball, so to speak, in terms of what tools you
- 15 have to work with.
- Now, in terms of the case law, I think the
- 17 case law that's more important to follow than these
- 18 kinds of context -- and there aren't that many urban
- 19 related cases under 40B. But the case law that's more
- 20 important to follow is the case law regarding the
- 21 economic impact of conditions that you might impose.
- 22 For example, if they say that it's uneconomic
- 23 to reduce to four stories and give you a ten-foot
- 24 setback but you impose that, there is very good case

- 1 law that provides models and standards as well as HAC
- 2 quidelines on how that process goes forward. And the
- 3 case law is much more favorable, as is the quidance on
- 4 those concepts, than they are, perhaps, on the
- 5 underlying issue. They don't even get to discuss the
- 6 underlying issue if the conditions you impose do not
- 7 render the project uneconomic.
- 8 So I think that that is something that you
- 9 have to address squarely and soon, in our opinion, if
- 10 you want this to all occur within the limited window
- 11 that the state gives you. I've always been a proponent
- 12 that six months is not long enough, but it's the
- 13 process we have, and it's at your doorstep now. So we
- 14 encourage you to work with this applicant quickly to
- 15 address those issues.
- Two meetings ago, the applicant said they'd
- 17 contact myself and Mr. Jacobs and have some meetings,
- 18 and I had some conversations with the elder Engler
- 19 about doing that as well, and I hoped that would be
- 20 productive. But they haven't occurred yet, and you're
- 21 heading to your fourth meeting or your fourth months of
- 22 meetings in September, so we would kind of encourage
- 23 the board to maybe challenge this applicant to make
- 24 this project conform with development patterns shortly.

- 1 Thank you.
- 2 MS. HOWARD: Hi. My name is Mary Howard. I
- 3 live at 108 Fuller Street, and I may be the only one
- 4 from the other side of the project who's spoken --
- 5 correct me if I'm wrong -- on the other side of Harvard
- 6 Street.
- 7 And I'm not sure I completely understand the
- 8 shadow studies, but it seems like our side of Harvard
- 9 Street is going to be cast in shadow for a lot of the
- 10 year. And the businesses that are on that side, the
- 11 ones that are right there are cafes and the bagel
- 12 place. And to enjoy those places, by removing the sun,
- 13 it just -- it just takes away the life of that corner
- 14 to me. It, like, creates a dark canopy over what that
- 15 place feels like. You're going to walk out onto Fuller
- 16 from the end of my street, and it's going to be this
- 17 block in front of me rather than this open field.
- The second thing is: Having all those people
- 19 in that apartment, I would imagine that a lot of them
- 20 would take their cars out of the parking during the day
- 21 just to have easy access, potentially. I don't know if
- 22 they would get permits to be parking along our street.
- 23 I just know that on my side of the street when school
- 24 is in session and businesses are sort of moving along,

- 1 the cars back up. You know, we're like one block in
- 2 beyond Gibbs. You know, the cars are getting backed up
- 3 and, you know, bumper-to-bumper cars all along our
- 4 street. And that -- if that's worse, it just feels
- 5 more like a stranger place than a neighborhood place.
- 6 So that's all.
- 7 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 8 MR. WHITE: Hi. Good evening. George Abbott
- 9 White, 143 Winchester Street, and I'm one of the town
- 10 meeting members for this precinct.
- I really appreciate Mr. Boehmer's careful look
- 12 up and down Harvard Street. It's quite a sweep. I
- 13 think my wife and I first saw it 50 years ago when we
- 14 moved to Brookline.
- The thing that concerns me, and I just would
- 16 like to emphasize in terms of the enormity of this
- 17 project, is how pedestrian it is. And I mean that in
- 18 the sense that I'm really glad that we moved to
- 19 Brookline. I'm glad that my daughter is moving back to
- 20 Brookline with us. To some extent, the design that's
- 21 been described is an embarrassment, and I'm sorry for
- 22 that and for her.
- This is the neighborhood that Joe Kennedy
- 24 moved to. I don't think that's irrelevant. Many of us

- 1 know that, and we feel very strongly about that. This
- 2 is the neighborhood that Joe Kennedy, Jr. and Jack
- 3 Kennedy had their first confirmation. They were at the
- 4 Devotion School. They were at St. Aiden's.
- 5 And when the Devotion, at 108- or
- 6 \$110 million, was being revised or renovated, that 1913
- 7 front was kept because it was kind of distinguishly
- 8 linked with the past. And not just with that family,
- 9 but with the sense of why people come to Brookline and
- 10 what kind of a place we want.
- 11 The design is pedestrian: the cookie-cutter
- 12 implementation of the windows, the lack of any really
- 13 distinguishing features. I'm sorry to say this, but
- 14 the amount of money that's being put into this, the
- 15 amount of time and energy you're spending and we're
- 16 spending looking at it, to some extent, some of the
- 17 conversation, to my mind, is beyond and beside the
- 18 point. It's a very poor, unimaginative design. It's
- 19 not worthy of this neighborhood, whether it's 100 feet
- 20 tall or 10 feet tall.
- 21 The last point I want to make is: I was in
- 22 this building today sort of tracking down what's
- 23 happening to my daughter's school, Devotion, a lower
- 24 and upper school now. Mention was made of the traffic

- 1 study coming up. The school is going to be hundreds of
- 2 children larger, and I think you know and I know that
- 3 many of those children are going to come from North
- 4 Brookline. That is, they're going to come from this
- 5 neighborhood. The cars are going to be coming down
- 6 Harvard Street, the cars are going to be coming
- 7 Coolidge, Fuller. Kids are going to be walking,
- 8 parents are going to be taking them.
- 9 And the egress, the designs in and out of this
- 10 building, this monstrous building, this enormous
- 11 building, really this gigantic building is just -- I
- 12 think my colleague Mr. Rosen asked us all when we walk
- 13 out tonight -- he said this the other night --
- 14 imagine -- look up at the town hall because that's what
- 15 this is going to be. And I thought we should all do
- 16 that. Look up. That's how big it's going to be.
- 17 So in terms of safety, which hasn't really
- 18 been emphasized, adding all those cars, adding the
- 19 difficulty of getting in and out, crowding the two
- 20 streets, Fuller and Coolidge, I think is unacceptable.
- 21 And I think we would support you in anything you can do
- 22 to reduce the size of this to something that's
- 23 reasonable, something that makes sense. Thanks very
- 24 much.

- 1 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 2 MR. SWARTZ: Hi. I'm Chuck Swartz. I live on
- 3 the north side of Centre Street. I'm also a town
- 4 meeting member representing Precinct 9.
- 5 Some of you know that I'm very concerned about
- 6 the character of the neighborhood. And since the
- 7 buildings on Centre Street, the high buildings on
- 8 Centre Street, of which there are three, have been
- 9 brought into this conversation, I do want to say that,
- 10 first of all, they're buildings that probably date back
- 11 to the '60s before there was such zoning oversight.
- 12 But they were built with setbacks. They have from 15-
- 13 to 25-foot setbacks, which make them less imposing on
- 14 the streetscape.
- Much has been said already about the mass of
- 16 this building, so I won't repeat anything, but I do
- 17 want to say that this is only one of several buildings
- 18 being proposed in this neighborhood, and if they are
- 19 all built, they're really going to overpower or
- 20 overwhelm this neighborhood. Now it's a friendly,
- 21 inviting streetscape and I'm really worried about that
- 22 being -- that continuing when buildings like this are
- 23 built.
- So I would urge the board to do whatever it

- 1 can, especially in the light of having to deal with
- 2 many proposals, not just one -- I would urge the board
- 3 to do its best to protect the neighbors and to protect
- 4 the interest of the town and work towards getting a
- 5 building that is appropriate for the space and that is
- 6 acceptable to the neighborhood. Thank you.
- 7 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 8 MR. MAUCH: I'm sorry to bother you again.
- 9 Hagen, H-A-G-E-N, M-A-U-C-H.
- 10 A lot was said about the setback of the
- 11 building for 44 Fuller Street. I took the effort to
- 12 measure the distance from our wall to the existing
- 13 unit. It's about 55 feet.
- When we bought the building, we were convinced
- 15 that this was going to be the wall we're going to have
- 16 to live with for the rest of our lives, and as a
- 17 result, we moved -- and the architect talked about the
- 18 windows. I just wanted to confirm that we moved our
- 19 quiet areas to the back of the building to take full
- 20 advantage of the 55 feet: bedrooms, we put --
- 21 bathroom, put a huge window in there, kitchen windows,
- 22 so we call that our quiet area of the house. So these
- 23 are not just windows, but these are very important
- 24 windows to us in our areas which require privacy and

- 1 quiet to sleep and to use the facilities. Thank you.
- 2 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 3 MR. PENDERY: Hi. My name is Steve Pendery.
- 4 I live at 26 Winchester Street, and I wish to speak
- 5 about a glaring safety issue that came to my attention
- 6 this week.
- 7 Looking at construction on Winchester Street
- 8 and driving around town that day, I noticed that some
- 9 construction sites in public ways had police details
- 10 and others didn't, and the one on Winchester Street
- 11 lacked a police detail. And so I observed as a
- 12 contractor blocked traffic in one lane and that
- 13 untrained crew members were managing traffic for about
- 14 a total of nine or ten hours that day. And because
- 15 of -- well, I mean, Winchester is pretty busy.
- So I thought I'd check into that and see --
- 17 because meanwhile, another project on Beacon Street had
- 18 a police detail. So I spoke with Sergeant Farris who
- 19 manages police details in Brookline, and he confessed,
- 20 in fact, that the town is shorthanded on police
- 21 details. And so he then referred me to the public
- 22 works department. And, in fact, they were pretty
- 23 straightforward about this and indicated that, well,
- 24 first of all, nothing can be done, which I thought was

- 1 an interesting response to a safety concern, and that
- 2 apparently there's a contract agreement between the
- 3 town and the police department that provides for police
- 4 doing traffic details when they can but, in fact,
- 5 there's no town bylaw that requires police details when
- 6 there's construction in public ways.
- 7 So it turns out that the police, at this
- 8 point, for their own reasons -- and I think it has to
- 9 with they're already working a lot of overtime doing,
- 10 perhaps, administrative and other work -- that there
- 11 aren't enough police available at this point in time
- 12 for them to cover the existing construction taking
- 13 place in Brookline. That's what I was told, and that,
- 14 quote, you can't stop work because there's no police
- 15 detail. So that was in response to my query to the
- 16 building department about how they felt about issuing
- 17 permits when they knew perfectly well that there would
- 18 be no police detail protecting the public.
- 19 So I think we can all assume that for this
- 20 whole spate of 40B projects in Coolidge Corner, there
- 21 probably will not be any police detail when the public
- 22 ways are opened up, when there are trucks, when there's
- 23 construction taking place in these congested areas, and
- 24 that since the building department goes ahead and

- 1 issues these permits, I think the real question is:
- 2 Should you be allowing these projects to happen in the
- 3 first place? Thanks.
- 4 MR. ROSEN: Hi. I'm Mark Rosen. I live over
- 5 on Thorndike Street.
- I want to start out by thanking George for
- 7 including me in his colleague posse. Thank you,
- 8 George. I appreciate that.
- 9 And I want to say that I'm here really just to
- 10 come up and affirm my support and agreement with the
- 11 people that have spoken in opposition to this
- 12 particular development at 420 Harvard. It really does
- 13 seem to be completely out of scale with common sense.
- 14 I have seen 40B housing that does blend in with the
- 15 neighborhood, and it's very heartwarming to see that
- 16 housing can be provided for low income people and in a
- 17 very nice neighborhood, and it's wonderful. But when
- 18 we have a project like this that's completely out of
- 19 scale, massing and just -- it's chilling, actually, and
- 20 the effect it will have on the neighborhood is just
- 21 really very negative.
- But what I wanted to come up tonight -- rather
- 23 than make comments, I did look over some of the
- 24 material that Maria had posted on the website, and I

- 1 noticed that I'm in agreement with the architecture --
- 2 and I wanted to thank him for his very nice
- 3 presentation and his letter. I thought it was very
- 4 thorough and very helpful and he raised some excellent
- 5 points.
- 6 But I looked at some of the material that the
- 7 developer submitted, and because there's such a great
- 8 lack of detail and information, I have some questions.
- 9 First off, it does not mention the size of the
- 10 parking spaces that are subterranean or even above
- 11 ground, and I'm concerned about what size these parking
- 12 spaces are. And I prefer not to call them "compact
- 13 size" or "standard size," but actually they have an
- 14 empirical measurement. Feet and inches would be the
- 15 most helpful.
- 16 And the reason for that is because in Edmunds'
- 17 survey -- these are the people who do the analysis of
- 18 car buying habits in the United States for American
- 19 buying public. They did a survey and released the top
- 20 ten automobiles that were purchased in the United
- 21 States last year. Of the top ten, seven of them were
- 22 SUVs and pickup trucks. And so I just want to be sure
- 23 that you're not going to be restricting the ability of
- 24 a person that has an SUV or a pickup truck to be able

- 1 to park their vehicle in this location.
- I also am concerned that -- as I looked at the
- 3 architect's drawing, that in the subterranean garage
- 4 that there are no indications anywhere on the diagram
- 5 for support columns, which we all have done parking in
- 6 garages before, so we know you have to have support
- 7 columns. But I don't see those indicated anywhere on
- 8 the design, so I thought that that would be very
- 9 helpful having that information.
- 10 And the other question I have is: How does
- 11 the traffic flow, actually, in the garage. I mean,
- 12 is -- what is the amount of the turning radius? These
- 13 may seem like very minute -- minutiae type of details,
- 14 but I feel that they're very important in terms of
- 15 practicality and understanding the feasibility of this
- 16 particular project and the proposal.
- Once again, I just want to say that I'm in
- 18 opposition to this proposal and in agreement with many
- 19 of my good neighbors who have come here tonight to
- 20 voice their opposition. And I want to thank the board
- 21 for allowing me to speak, and I want to thank
- 22 Mr. Boehmer for doing such a terrific study and really
- 23 showing the pluses and the minuses of this particular
- 24 project. Thanks so much.

- 1 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 2 Anybody else?
- 3 MR. ROSEN: I'm sorry. I do have an
- 4 additional comment. This, again, is Mark Rosen. I
- 5 live on Thorndike Street.
- 6 As I was looking at the diagrams for the
- 7 subterranean parking, I noticed that the majority of
- 8 parking spaces are tandem. If you look at them,
- 9 they're tandem. And I'm wondering, well, how does that
- 10 exactly work? Because not everybody's on the same
- 11 schedule and, you know, not everybody works 9 to 5 so
- 12 they're all out at the same time and they all come back
- 13 at the same time.
- And I live in a home that has three parking
- 15 spaces in the driveway, pretty much a tandem parking
- 16 situation. And when my car is in the driveway and I
- 17 have to get it moved and there's two cars behind me,
- 18 everybody has to get up with their keys and run out and
- 19 get their cars going and we all move the cars.
- 20 So I'm wondering, how's that work for this
- 21 particular development? Is there going to be a
- 22 24-hour, on-duty parking attendant valet to assist with
- 23 majority of the parking spaces that are tandem and seem
- 24 to be rather impractical, actually, for this type of a

- 1 development? And that's my last comment. Thank you so
- 2 much.
- 3 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 4 Applicant?
- 5 MR. ENGLER: Bob Engler the senior for the
- 6 developer.
- 7 This is the first we've heard from Cliff's
- 8 report. Obviously we just got it. We take it very
- 9 seriously. We take the comments very, very seriously.
- 10 We have a working session Thursday, which is really
- 11 getting down to how we're changing this project, and
- 12 that's the beginning of probably other changes.
- I told the neighbors and Jay that we would
- 14 meet. After we tried to deal with Cliff and all his
- 15 comments, we'd be able to talk to the neighborhood if
- 16 they had more comments.
- 17 So yes, three months have gone by, but we have
- 18 a lot of work to do in a short period of time, which we
- 19 intend to do. And I'll represent that we want to make
- 20 this a project that works and understand what you're
- 21 saying, or even haven't said, and really the same
- 22 things that have been said by everybody, including
- 23 Cliff.
- So we have our charge, and we have to look as

- 1 carefully as we can at that plus the economics. But
- 2 the design considerations, the lack of detail, the
- 3 things that we haven't got to yet, we'll get to as
- 4 quickly as we can and that's really where we're going
- 5 from here.
- 6 So we don't have any comments tonight,
- 7 obviously, but we have plenty to work on and we will do
- 8 so.
- 9 MR. GELLER: Okay. Don't leave yet. A couple
- 10 questions for you: One, you touched on working
- 11 sessions, and I thank you for bringing that up. I want
- 12 to confirm that you will participate in working
- 13 sessions which will be set up through our planning.
- MS. MORELLI: Yeah. If you could just clarify
- 15 the attendance of the applicants.
- MR. GELLER: Right. That's what I'm trying to
- 17 get to.
- 18 Will the applicant be participating?
- 19 MR. ENGLER: The applicant -- I will represent
- 20 the applicant and the architect would be there. So
- 21 that's very important.
- MS. POVERMAN: That's been an issue in the
- 23 past.
- MS. STEINFELD: Alison Steinfeld, planning

- 1 director. Obviously, the planning department will be
- 2 happy to work with the development team, but as far as
- 3 I'm concerned, if the owner, specifically Victor Sheen,
- 4 does not participate, there's really no point in
- 5 town -- being town staff, planning department, police,
- 6 fire -- participating.
- 7 MR. GELLER: Well, isn't the issue that the
- 8 participant in the working session has to have
- 9 decision-marking authority? That's really the issue.
- 10 MS. STEINFELD: The applicant has to have
- 11 decision-making authority. Obviously, town staff
- 12 does not.
- 13 MR. GELLER: Understood. I'm not saying that
- 14 anyone within the working sessions outside -- until
- 15 they bring it to the ZBA and the ZBA makes a decision,
- 16 nothing is -- you know, there's nothing bound.
- 17 However, for purposes of working sessions to
- 18 bring forth fruit, if you will, you need somebody on
- 19 behalf of the applicant who has the authority to say we
- 20 can do this or we can't do this or whatever it is.
- 21 That's really the issue. So whether that's Mr. Sheen
- 22 or whether that's Mr. Engler, it is about whoever has
- 23 that decision-making authority.
- MR. ENGLER: I would like to comment on that.

- 1 You make the decisions and we respond. The
- 2 in-between is important, very important, the working
- 3 sessions. But if the owners -- if Victor and the
- 4 ownership team has given the architect authority to
- 5 deal with Cliff and other comments and come back to
- 6 them so they can see what's happened and be able to
- 7 report back to you what you're willing to do, that's no
- 8 different than if they were sitting in the room. And
- 9 the same with me being charged to do certain things.
- So the fact that they don't want to be in the
- 11 room, because we're going to be there representing them
- 12 doesn't take away from the progress that gets made
- 13 because they're giving us a chance to really do all
- 14 that work, to hear from everybody, hear from fire and
- 15 police. The architects are the ones back and forth on
- 16 how to make this project work. We go back to them, we
- 17 talk to them, and we're back to you with some changes
- 18 which they've authorized to be made. So it isn't
- 19 making decisions on the spot in the working sessions.
- 20 It's hearing all that stuff and then going back and
- 21 deciding what to do.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Is there a reason why they
- 23 don't want to participate?
- MS. STEINFELD: It's just one person.

- Yeah, he's here.
- 3 Could you come forward, Mr. Sheen, and let us
- 4 know why you don't want to participate? Because it
- 5 would be much more effective in the limited time we
- 6 have. And, as I understand it, you have rejected our
- 7 request to give a two-month extension. It would be
- 8 very helpful for us to know why you do not want to
- 9 participate in a very effective method of letting us
- 10 know --
- 11 MR. SHEEN: Sure.
- MS. POVERMAN: If you could come forward so we
- 13 can all here you. Thank you.
- 14 MR. SHEEN: This is Victor Sheen representing
- 15 420 Harvard Associates.
- 16 Quite frankly, it's a logistical issue. I
- 17 initially just got back from being away on vacation for
- 18 about 10 days and, you know, I fully trust Bob and
- 19 Dartagnan in representing the ownership. This is why
- 20 we hired them.
- 21 And the same way that the town has entrusted
- 22 the working sessions to the planning staff as well as
- 23 Cliff, you know, I -- you know, I welcome that the ZBA
- 24 members come to the working sessions as well. And I

- believe that, you know, all of us are quite constrained
- 2 in terms of time as well as resources. And, quite
- frankly, this is not the only project that we manage or 3
- 4 work on. And I've given the team the authority to make
- 5 some design decisions, and they will bring the design
- 6 revisions to us in the same way that Cliff will -- and
- 7 the staff will bring those revisions to the board for
- 8 approvals or discussions and whatnot.
- 9 This is not the only working session that we
- 10 have scheduled. I believe that there has been, at
- 11 least penciled, about three or four working sessions,
- 12 so I didn't necessarily believe that the -- that my
- presence will be material in this particular working 13
- 14 session.
- 15 And in working with my schedule -- and I
- 16 assume that, you know, the chairman and the rest of the
- 17 board have day jobs as well. You know, I don't expect
- 18 the board members to sit in on those working sessions,
- 19 and you trust your very capable staff and clearly their
- capable architect peer reviewers to make some 20
- recommendations. And that's what we do. I mean, we 21
- 22 hire, you know, the best consultant on 40B as well as
- 23 working with Dartagnan and his team and -- because we
- 24 trust them. We trust the decisions that they bring

- 1 forth and the recommendations that they make.
- 2 MS. SCHNEIDER: Judi -- I mean, I think --
- 3 look, obviously, to the applicant, you've heard both
- 4 this board and planning staff express a very strong
- 5 preference that you attend this meeting and that you
- 6 make it a priority, particularly given the very short
- 7 time that we have to work with. And I hope that you
- would reconsider your position and attend, again, given 8
- 9 how little time we have and how much you are hearing
- 10 that this is important to this town and to this board
- 11 that you participate.
- 12 But I would like to ask Judi, our consultant,
- 13 whether it is the norm that the applicant participate
- in these kinds of working sessions or if that decision-14
- 15 making authority typically is delegated to its
- 16 consultant.
- 17 MS. BARRETT: I have never, in all my time
- 18 working in this field, have been in the work sessions
- 19 when the applicant wasn't present. Frankly, I think
- it's insulting to this board that the applicant for the 20
- 21 permit --
- 22 (Interruption in the proceedings.)
- 23 MS. STEINFELD: Judi, no one heard anything
- 24 after the consultant. Grab the microphone.

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1
             MS. BARRETT:
                           I think it's insulting to this
    board that it's having its feet held to the fire to
 2
 3
    complete this process in 180 days but an applicant for
 4
    a permit cannot take this process seriously enough to
    attend the work sessions. I've never seen it done.
 5
 6
             Obviously, the board can't require you to do
 7
         I suppose you could decide, perhaps, to handle the
8
    work sessions a different way. But I'm just -- I'm
 9
    appalled, frankly. I'm absolutely appalled.
10
             MR. SHEEN:
                         May I follow up with a comment?
11
             I strongly object to your categorization that
12
    we don't take this very seriously. We've spent an
13
    enormous amount of resources tying to invest in this
    neighborhood, in this town. This is not the only
14
15
    project that we do, and we have consistently -- we have
16
    consistently responded in a timely manner to the staff
17
    requests and to expedite our design changes and respond
18
    to preliminary comments made by the neighbors as well
19
    as some of the concerns raised by the board.
20
    strongly object to the characterization that our team
21
    is not taking this seriously.
22
             (Multiple parties speaking.)
23
             MR. GELLER: I want to get to the answer,
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24

so --

- 1 MR. SHEEN: This is not a -- again, this is
- 2 not -- 420 Harvard Street is not the -- it's not a
- project that I own in -- as an individual, and there 3
- 4 are other partners, other principals. I will certainly
- 5 look into the availabilities of other key
- 6 decision-makers.
- 7 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: Seriously --
- 8 MR. GELLER: Excuse me, excuse me. He wasn't
- 9 calling catcalls when you were speaking. He was
- 10 respectful of you.
- 11 UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER: What he's
- 12 saying doesn't sound very respectful to me.
- 13 MR. GELLER: Excuse me. Let him speak.
- 14 MR. ENGLER: I would add a couple of things.
- I'm surprised at Judi's comments because, first of all, 15
- I've been in as many towns as she has, maybe 150. 16
- 17 Brookline has got its own set of programs, which is all
- 18 these working sessions. And I've told Maria this.
- 19 hear what you're saying. We hear what the peer review
- consultants say and we come back, having heard that and 20
- 21 made changes to give you the benefit of what we're
- saying. 22
- 23 The peer review is kind of an in-between step
- 24 to help us focus where we are, which we kind of know

- 1 where we are anyway. So I don't see the peer review
- 2 as -- I, frankly, sometimes think it slows down the
- 3 process, not speeds it up.
- We're at risk of not giving you a project that
- 5 you're going to approve, so it's totally on us to hear
- 6 what Victor -- I mean what Cliff has said and what
- 7 other people have said and get back to you with the
- 8 right kinds of information.
- 9 The fact he's not coming to the session
- 10 doesn't slow down our procedure for giving you a
- 11 project that you'll support. That's totally on us. So
- 12 whether we choose to meet in peer review session -- in
- 13 working sessions or not, you have a schedule. We're
- 14 going to be here. We're going to present to you our
- 15 changes. You're going to say you like them or not.
- 16 We'll come back and make more changes or we'll say,
- 17 here it is. Here's what we have. So I don't see that
- 18 the working sessions and the participation of the owner
- 19 versus the team is interfering with that process.
- 20 MS. STEINFELD: I don't know if it's worth
- 21 reiterating. Obviously, the planning department will
- 22 do what the ZBA requests, but I don't think I need to
- 23 remind the ZBA that the planning department and the ZBA
- 24 is in an untenable situation at this point. With four

- 1 40Bs and three more coming, we do not have time. Time
- 2 is of the essence, and I'm very concerned about delays.
- 3 And if the owner is not there, there's going to be more
- 4 delays.
- 5 MR. GELLER: All understood.
- 6 MS. STEINFELD: Thank you.
- 7 MR. GELLER: I think the cold, hard fact is
- 8 the applicant doesn't care. Okay? So we can only deal
- 9 with this specific application. That's what's in front
- 10 of us.
- In terms of -- I'm going to try and simplify
- 12 this. Okay? So I'm going to ask -- well, let me first
- 13 ask Judi a question.
- I mean, you know, frankly, if the applicant
- 15 doesn't want to participate in working sessions, we
- 16 don't have any recourse.
- 17 MS. BARRETT: No.
- 18 MR. GELLER: No. Okay. Thank you.
- 19 Applicant, you've heard the sentiment, and if
- 20 it hasn't been clear, forgetting what everyone else
- 21 says, it is the sentiment of the ZBA -- and I apologize
- 22 for summarizing -- it is the sentiment of the ZBA that
- 23 it would be particularly helpful to an efficient
- 24 process if you would participate in these working

- 1 sessions and --
- 2 MR. SHEEN: I will make myself available if
- 3 that is helpful in facilitating this --
- 4 MR. GELLER: It absolutely is, and I thank
- 5 you.
- 6 MR. SHEEN: I will attend.
- 7 MR. GELLER: Thank you.
- 8 Okay. So in terms of working sessions,
- 9 Alison, you will do your magic and -- tap Maria -- the
- 10 magic team. So you will get those started.
- One other detail that Mr. Engler touched on
- 12 that I just want to raise again is missing information.
- 13 And you said we're working on it, we'll get it to the
- 14 town. I would hope that that would coordinate with
- 15 this process so that we can narrow down missing
- 16 details. Okay? That would be a personal ask from me.
- 17 Thank you. And I assume that's the meaning of what you
- 18 were saying.
- 19 MR. ENGLER: Yes, it is.
- MR. GELLER: Okay. So now that we've been
- 21 through all of that, I want to start the process of ZBA
- 22 members talking about the project, and it's sort of
- 23 tricky. It's tricky because we obviously -- although
- 24 we've heard from peer review on design, we have yet to

- 1 hear traffic as well as stormwater, drainage, and other
- 2 relevant peer review issues. I believe we're still
- 3 outstanding something from fire and safety.
- 4 So when board members are speaking, I just
- 5 want you to be aware that, in fair deference, that
- 6 information is forthcoming, so our comments should be
- 7 limited to testimony, should be limited to peer review
- 8 that we've had so far. And it's fine to sort of
- 9 project information, but I would ask you to, in some
- 10 ways, reserve your judgement until those peer review
- 11 reviewers are present. Okay?
- 12 So who wants to start?
- MS. PALERMO: I'll start. I've been quiet.
- 14 It's my turn.
- Well, thank you everyone in the community and
- 16 our peer review architect. Thank you very much.
- I will just highlight two things. I, first of
- 18 all, understand that it is difficult for the developer
- 19 to identify all of the details in connection with this
- 20 project before answering the big questions. And the
- 21 big questions are: How big is the building going to
- 22 be, and where's the parking going to be located, and
- 23 how are cars going to enter and exit the parking area?
- 24 Those are the big questions.

- 1 And once we have the answers to those and once
- 2 the developer has decided what he can do, at that
- 3 point, they can refine their design. Very
- 4 specifically, we want a cost of materials. Materials
- 5 cost money. Some materials cost more money, some
- 6 materials cost less. And I completely understand the
- 7 difficulty of deciding how much you're going to spend
- 8 on materials when you haven't figured out how big the
- 9 building is going to be.
- 10 So from my perspective, I would hope that it's
- 11 become abundantly clear to this developer that the
- 12 building is too big and it has too many stories, and I
- 13 don't think it would be possible for me to support a
- comprehensive permit with the peer review report that 14
- 15 we have demonstrating that this building is completely
- 16 out of scale with this neighborhood. So that is the
- 17 first thing that needs to be addressed.
- 18 I'm also concerned with respect to the second
- 19 issue, which is parking and exiting and entering the
- parking lot. We did receive a letter from a Mr. Law, 20
- 21 which Maria distributed to us earlier today, and I'm
- 22 not sure if it made it onto the website, but I think
- 23 it's --
- 24 MS. MORELLI: It's a new document. I got it

- 1 at about 5:00.
- 2 MS. PALERMO: Okay. Well, we saw it
- 3 electronically, and a couple of people in the audience
- 4 have mentioned the same thing. And I will admit I was
- 5 very struck by this, that we are looking at a curb cut
- 6 somewhere in the neighborhood of 45 feet, 46 feet,
- 7 which has two entrances and two exits. And once again,
- 8 I think that is really, really going to be very
- 9 difficult to justify for any project. And in addition,
- 10 across the street is a entrance and exit from the
- 11 parking lot. So I think that's something that I hope
- 12 to see some redesign and rethinking: how you're going
- 13 to exit and enter that parking lot and where those
- 14 parking spaces are going to be located.
- I know it's a struggle to try to make the
- 16 neighborhood happy. You obviously have a division
- 17 between the people who live on Coolidge Street and the
- 18 people who live on Fuller Street. The people who live
- 19 on Fuller Street want you to have more traffic on
- 20 Coolidge Street, and the people who live on Coolidge
- 21 Street want you to have more traffic on Fuller Street
- 22 if there's going to be more traffic. Your job is not
- 23 necessarily to try to make everyone happy, but it's to
- 24 come up with a good design that could, in fact, be

- 1 supported by the zoning board of appeals. And I really
- 2 hope that when we see you again you'll have done all of
- 3 those things.
- 4 MR. GELLER: Wow. That was well said.
- 5 MS. POVERMAN: So I will not be as eloquent,
- 6 I'm sure, but I have the same concerns that Lark has in
- 7 that it's hard to really address the little issues that
- 8 need to be addressed until the big ones are addressed,
- 9 and that is size and mass.
- 10 And as Mr. Boehmer's report said and as a lot
- 11 of the neighbors have commented, the building is not
- 12 consistent with the streetscape and does not appear or
- 13 does not apparently follow the 40B design guidelines
- 14 for what should be in the neighborhood trying to fit
- 15 into the streetscape. Part of that is significantly
- 16 having to do with size, with it being the proposed
- 17 largest building on Harvard Street in its whole two
- 18 miles length from Boston throughout Brookline.
- 19 Stylistically it's a no-go, but also for
- 20 safety reasons it's going to be a no-go. But I think
- 21 that's going to be, in my opinion so far, in
- 22 anticipation of the traffic reports that are going to
- 23 come. In part, that's based on my own personal
- 24 experience of 25 years in the neighborhood, driving in

- 1 the area, my daughter having accidents across the
- 2 street in that parking lot, and the traffic of the
- 3 children, which I think is something which is
- 4 necessary.
- 5 So I agree with what Lark has said. I think
- 6 it's going to be very difficult to get a project of
- 7 that height and that mass with those setbacks approved
- 8 by the ZBA.
- 9 I think that some of the information I will
- 10 need to have before I can comment on a building of any
- 11 size includes the following: One of the most important
- 12 ones is -- especially timewise -- I don't want to have
- 13 to wait until we give our traffic report and then a
- 14 whole new study goes out. It's a traffic study that's
- 15 done when school is in session, including a pedestrian
- 16 study that includes all the kids that are going to be
- 17 flowing down those streets at quarter of eight
- 18 o'clock -- you're going to be mowed over by them,
- 19 Mr. Sheen, if you stand out there -- and the traffic
- 20 that comes with dropping them off. That's really a key
- 21 element of the safety analysis here.
- I think we do need to expand the reach of the
- 23 shadow study. I think there were very good points made
- 24 in terms of the exact circumference of how far the

- 1 building will go. Now, if you drop it down first, then
- 2 the shadow may not be as relevant, so that's sort of a
- 3 chicken-and-egg thing that has to be approached or
- 4 addressed.
- 5 I'm not going to be able to make a decision --
- 6 a final decision on the project until I do know what
- 7 the materials are and, obviously, the final look of the
- 8 thing, what the units are going to look like, making
- 9 sure that the units are consistent among the 40B, the
- 10 affordable housing, and the retail rental group, retail
- 11 price rental.
- We're going to need to know what the
- 13 mechanicals are. I know you spoke to that to some
- 14 degree, but again, you can't operate in a vacuum here.
- I also think the point about the deliveries on
- 16 Coolidge Street was a very good point, especially if
- 17 there is no agreement with The Butcherie. I think we
- 18 need to have that resolved. And it might be necessary
- 19 to have somebody from The Butcherie come in and speak
- 20 on the agreement and say, yeah, we have resolved this.
- 21 Because if you do have an agreement to pull into some
- 22 side area that you've agreed on and then go down an
- 23 alley, that's a great way of resolving the traffic,
- 24 which is hellatious when there are trucks there with

- 1 The Butcherie.
- 2 And I'm wondering -- this is again for Judi --
- 3 is it possible to make as a condition for a 40B project
- 4 that in the construction management portion that they
- 5 hire somebody to manage the traffic? I mean, this is
- 6 something that's going to come up with every single
- 7 project that goes on in --
- 8 MS. BARRETT: You can't require a 40B project
- 9 to do something that's not required of other
- 10 developments, so I think you really -- I can't directly
- 11 answer the question except to say that I don't know
- 12 what the town's policies are, but if the town is
- 13 allowing other construction to go forward without
- 14 requiring a police detail, I don't really see how you
- 15 can require it for a 40B.
- MS. POVERMAN: Jesse, do projects of a certain
- 17 size have to have a police detail?
- 18 MR. GELLER: I don't know what the town
- 19 provides.
- 20 Can you find out from Peter?
- MS. MORELLI: Sure.
- MS. POVERMAN: So it's a valid concern, but
- 23 it's -- you know, frankly, I think you can't stop a
- 24 project. It's a reality that we have to deal with as a

- 1 town and as with the police and -- you know, that's
- 2 just something that has to be worked out.
- I am, as you probably picked up, concerned
- 4 about the time and that's why I appreciate your
- 5 agreeing to participate in the working sessions so that
- 6 as much as possible can be done. I think that in the
- 7 next two weeks, the next time we meet -- we need to
- 8 know in the next month, at the very latest, what size
- 9 building we're dealing with. And if we don't know
- 10 that, we can't make any recommendation.
- 11 MS. PALERMO: Two weeks. That's not a month
- 12 decision. That can be done in two weeks, I believe.
- 13 MS. POVERMAN: Yeah. Because if we don't know
- 14 that, we can't say yea or nay. Or we can't say, you
- 15 know, yeah, like a -- yeah, you've got a -- you know,
- 16 one apartment building house and we're going to tell
- 17 you to find out if that's economic or prove that it's
- 18 not. So we need to move quickly here, as Alison
- 19 emphasizes, as Judi emphasizes, as Mr. Talerman
- 20 emphasized. And as you guys know, without an
- 21 extension, Mr. Sheen, we need these numbers.
- MR. SHEEN: I fully understand the constraints
- 23 and I --
- MS. POVERMAN: And Mr. Engler knows very

- 1 well -- as well -- better than anyone, having been
- 2 through so many of these.
- 3 So when do we want this information, quys?
- 4 MS. PALERMO: Well, we have a hearing on
- 5 September 13th. I assume at least the major items I
- 6 listed, you can come in with new designs addressing
- 7 those items.
- 8 MR. BROWN: Correct.
- 9 MS. PALERMO: And after that, it would be
- 10 appropriate to expect more refinement of things like
- 11 materials. But I think really the key issue here is:
- 12 How small can they get this building to be on the land
- 13 that they have, and how can we address what are real
- 14 issues involved in parking and exiting and entering
- 15 that parking lot?
- 16 MR. SHEEN: Yes.
- 17 MS. SCHNEIDER: I would just -- for the sake
- 18 of time, I would echo Lark's comments. I think she
- 19 summed it up very nicely.
- The only thing that I would add in addition to
- 21 the fact that I think we've heard -- you've heard from
- 22 the neighborhood, you've heard from us, you've now
- 23 heard from the peer consultant. The project is --
- 24 currently it's too big for this site. It's just

- 1 totally out of scale with the entire streetscape. So
- 2 we're clearly looking for a smaller project.
- 3 But I think one other thing that I would ask
- 4 you to give careful consideration to is the design.
- 5 And I think that, you know, Cliff made a comment about
- 6 the relationship of height to setback. I think it's
- 7 perfectly appropriate for the front of the building to
- 8 be aligned with the retail on Harvard. But I think
- 9 what's missing is a setback of the residential height
- 10 so that you're maintaining the street wall and the feel
- 11 of the street.
- 12 And to the extent that you're going to have
- 13 height, let's call it a three-story, four-story
- 14 building behind it, but it's set back enough so that it
- 15 does feel like a natural extension of the streetscape,
- 16 primarily on Harvard, but I think also on Fuller. And
- 17 so that if you pull the height back -- I mean, I work
- 18 on really tall buildings in Boston all the time. You
- 19 know, my architects stand up and they say, you know,
- 20 above whatever the prevailing ground plane is, people
- 21 don't notice the height as much. It's not as offensive
- 22 if it's set back a little bit.
- 23 And so I think -- and I say this directly to
- 24 the architect -- think about ways that you can pull

- 1 back the mass so that we're able to maintain the
- 2 character of the street, which clearly means so much to
- 3 the town and so much to the community. Maybe still get
- 4 a big chunk of your units. And probably not six
- 5 stories of units, but a big chunk of your units, but
- 6 pull it back in a way so that it's not towering over
- 7 people on that street corner. And I think that, you
- 8 know, playing with the massing in that way may end up
- 9 making a big difference.
- 10 MR. BROWN: Understood.
- 11 MR. GELLER: I'm going to follow my own rule,
- 12 but I'm going to start slightly differently.
- I just want to comment that one of the
- 14 understandings of 40B is that an applicant gets greater
- 15 mass, greater density, they get to build bigger than
- 16 what we would ordinarily approve under 40A so that -- I
- 17 want to keep that in mind.
- 18 Let me raise one other point, which is that
- 19 one of the dichotomies here is that this building
- 20 really has -- touches on two different neighborhoods.
- 21 One is a commercial face, which is Harvard Street.
- 22 It's a retail strip. And the other is Fuller and
- 23 behind the building. That's residential. And I think
- 24 that we have to be mindful of those two aspects. And

- 1 in particular, we have to be mindful on Fuller Street,
- 2 taking your comments, that the facade on Fuller
- 3 Street -- you should consider the fact that it is
- 4 really a residential street. And I think in the
- 5 context of constructing a building that is contextual,
- 6 that you need to take that into account: scale,
- 7 appearance. That's not my primary comment.
- 8 My primary comment really relates to the
- 9 overarching implication of all of the points that
- 10 Mr. Boehmer is raising and the -- and due to each one
- 11 of those factors: lack of setbacks, height, that all
- 12 of those things filtered together create what I view as
- 13 a building that raises safety concerns and raises
- 14 environmental concerns. I don't mean hazardous
- 15 materials. I mean the environment.
- And as far as the rest of it, I agree with
- 17 her.
- 18 So, hopefully you will take these as
- 19 constructive comments, and you will directly
- 20 participate in the working sessions, as you said you
- 21 will -- I know you have said you will -- and we will
- 22 see some changes on September 13th.
- Let me also note that on September 13th, we
- 24 will also have traffic peer review and also a

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presentation by the town engineer relative to
 2
    stormwater drainage.
 3
             Uh-oh. Alison is standing up.
             MS. STEINFELD: On that note, I just want to
 4
 5
   make sure that both the applicant and the ZBA
 6
   understand that the traffic peer reviewer will be
 7
   reviewing the plans from August 10th, not any plans
 8
    that has -- basically, I've learned that 40B is all
 9
    chicken and eggs. Nothing makes sense in terms of
10
    timing. But thank you.
11
             MR. GELLER: Thank you, Alison.
12
             Okay. I want to thank everyone for their
13
   participation this evening, and I will see you on
    September 13th, 7:00 p.m.
14
15
             (Proceedings adjourned at 9:10 p.m.)
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1 I, Kristen C. Krakofsky, court reporter and 2 notary public in and for the Commonwealth of 3 Massachusetts, certify: 4 That the foregoing proceedings were taken 5 before me at the time and place herein set forth and 6 that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of 7 my shorthand notes so taken. 8 I further certify that I am not a relative or 9 employee of any of the parties, nor am I financially 10 interested in the action. I declare under penalty of perjury that the 11 foregoing is true and correct. 12 13 Dated this 12th day of September, 2016. 14 Kristen Krakofsky, Notary Public 15 My commission expires November 3, 2017. 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

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